

From: Steven Paul, CPA
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 7:16pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

RE: Microsoft Antitrust Settlement

I would like to see the proposed settlement with Dept of Justice and the various States Attorneys General concluded. I believe that Microsoft competitors were behind the instigation of the government's lawsuit in the beginning and no value exists in continuing this effort. An effort, I might add that seems to have at its heart the goal of propping up products which may not truly be competition to Microsoft products.

Standardization of various software platforms and aggressive software development guardianship was in my opinion at the root of and will continue (if allowed to continue by conclusion of this case) to keep America at the forefront of this industry. The software products, platforms and hardware development that the government believes were harmed by Microsoft's alleged anti-competitive behaviors were probably not the best platforms, software and hardware protocols in the marketplace. This Darwinian Natural Selection should not be artificially derailed simply to appease Microsoft's competitors.

I found it interesting that Netscape Navigator filed suit against Microsoft in the waning days of the public comment period on the Anti-trust settlement. The timing and stated-motivation were intended to draw attention to another allegation by a competitor of unfair competition by Microsoft. Don't buy it. This is all part of the show intended to change the proposed settlement terms and protract the government's litigation for the benefit of Microsoft competitors. I'd guess that AOL...the biggest fish in the Internet Service Provider pond...probably knew what it was doing when it purchased Netscape for \$10Billion during the Dept of Justice litigation. I don't really think it was gambling on a court judgment that would result in Microsoft's breakup when AOL decided on the purchase. It only indicates how tenuous the leader's real role is in this rapidly evolving industry. And look at AOL/Time Warner itself. It probably controls the largest content for potential future internet traffic. I believe AOL's proclaimed motivations in guiding Netscapes lawsuit against Microsoft are disingenuous.

I do not feel I have been harmed economically from Microsoft's business practices and don't believe you could find any consumers who have been. In fact, I believe that the large drop in prices of computer hardware and peripherals while at the same time having ever more powerful, faster and easier to utilize hardware and software applications has been, at least in part, the fruit of those business practices.

I would like to see the proposed Settlement accepted by all parties. It's time to move on and halt the flow of government resources into this current misguided effort.

Sincerely,
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